

Archives
closed
LD
175
•A40K
Th
157

HISTORY OF SANDY PLAINS BAPTIST
CHURCH 1863-1963

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty of the Social Science Department
Appalachian State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts

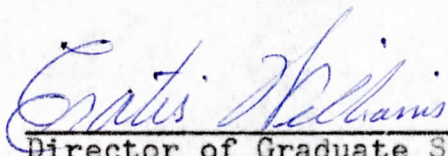
by
Arthur Philip Psomadakis
August 1964

HISTORY OF SANDY PLAINS BAPTIST
CHURCH 1863-1963

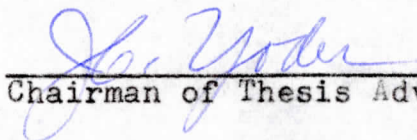
by

Arthur Philip Psomadakis

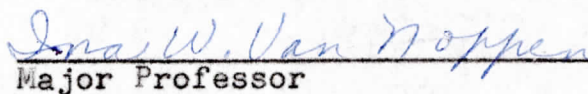
Approved by:



Director of Graduate Studies



Chairman of Thesis Advisory Committee



Major Professor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	iii
I WHY THE BAPTISTS BEGAN PREACHING IN THE "UNION SECTION" OF GASTON COUNTY	1
II ORGANIZATION OF UNION BAPTIST CHURCH	9
III WHY THE CHURCH WAS RELOCATED AND RENAMED	14
IV GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (1871-1921)	16
V GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (1921-1963)	22
VI CHURCH RELATED ORGANIZATIONS	35
VII ASSOCIATIONAL MEMBERSHIP	42
VIII HISTORY OF THE BETHEL MISSION	44
BIBLIOGRAPHY	46
APPENDIX	48

INTRODUCTION

Over a period of several months, materials have been collected for possible use in writing this history. At times great disappointment was experienced when a piece of information could not be found. Many of the old church records had been lost, and some were illegible beyond interpretation. It is evident that in trying to cover one hundred years of history there will be imperfections and omissions due to insufficient records. Had this history been written several years ago, before the passing on of some of the "founding fathers", the accounts would have been much more complete and accurate.

Being a member of Sandy Plains Baptist Church, I became interested in its history in the spring of 1963, when plans were being formulated to hold a centennial celebration during the summer of this year. Seeing the beauty of the church as it now stands, I had no idea that it would be celebrating its one hundredth year of growth, progress, and service to the "Union Section" of Gaston County. That it was begun during the Civil War was even harder to realize at first, but after learning something about the people involved in this task, their dedication and devotion to their beliefs and principles, I can quite clearly see the church from its beginning in 1863 to its place in the community today.

My purpose in writing this history is simple. First, it will be used as a thesis for the master of arts degree, and second, it will be used as a simple record of the church for the enjoyment of its members. In the presentation of this history I have tried to arrange the chapters in a manner which will be both informative and interesting to the reader.

In Chapter I will be found the basic reasons behind the organization of a Baptist church in the "Union Section" of Gaston County, North Carolina. Chapter II will deal with the beginning of the church, then known as Union Baptist Church, while Chapter III presents the events of the removal of the church to a new location, at which time it was re-named Sandy Plains Baptist Church.

Chapters IV and V will show the growth and development of the church, presenting the men who served as pastors and their accomplishments. Since this phase of the church's history covers a period of approximately ninety years, Chapter IV will cover the years 1871-1921, and Chapter V will begin with 1921 and end with the centennial celebration in 1963.

The remaining chapters will present other vital information. In Chapter VI the purpose will be to show the development and growth of the various organizations which serve the church. Included in this chapter will be the Sunday School, the Training Union, the Brotherhood, and the

Women's Missionary Society. Chapter VII will deal with the church's associational membership, while Chapter VIII will trace the church's role in starting a mission church from its beginning to the time it became an independent church.

For encouragement and assistance in preparing this history, I acknowledge my debt to the following: Bettye, my wife, for her great assistance in locating materials and for helping to record and recheck the vital statistics of the church; Dr. Ina VanNoppen for her helpful suggestions and criticisms; Z. Miller Freeman, the present pastor of the church, for his help in locating some of the necessary records; Bill Hoffman, pastor of the Pine Grove Baptist Church, for supplying the records of his church; and to the many churches and colleges for allowing me to use their facilities and records.

CHAPTER I

WHY THE BAPTISTS BEGAN PREACHING IN THE "UNION SECTION" OF GASTON COUNTY

"The fundamental principle of the Baptists is the competency of the individual with God, without priest, sacrament, or other mediator than Jesus Christ."¹ As Baptists believe that each individual must be reconciled to God for himself, the church is composed of regenerated members; by regeneration is meant the new birth which comes to one who repents and accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. The local Baptist church is completely independent of any other church or ecclesiastical body, but it may adhere to the practice of joining with other churches to form an association. Admission to the church is by baptism after a profession of faith to show that the candidate has come into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. The method of baptism is probably the one characteristic which makes Baptists different from most other denominations.² On the subject of baptism, the Baptists differ in two respects: first, they do not believe in infant baptism because they do not believe that baptism is a sacrament bestowing either salvation or any other good upon

¹George W. Paschal, History of North Carolina Baptists, Vol. I (Raleigh: Edwards-Broughton Co., 1930), p. 7.

²Ibid.

infants. Baptists believe that the New Testament teaches that baptism should be given to those who have become Christians, whether they are young or old. By baptism a person confesses that he is a disciple of Jesus Christ, being buried with Him and raised to walk in newness of life. The second respect in which Baptists differ from most other denominations is the mode of baptism. It is the Baptist belief that immersion is the proper mode.

Other principles concerning the church in which Baptists believe are: the church is a democracy in which every member has an equal voice; the church officers are elected by the members and their tenure of office is governed by the church; and "the one rule for faith and practice is the New Testament which every member is allowed to read and interpret for himself."³

As we look upon past history concerning man's struggle for freedom of worship, we can clearly see why the Baptists began preaching in the "Union Section" of Gaston County.⁴ Most of the people of this section who became Baptists were members of no church. Also there were Baptist families already living in the community who were without a church building. These people, along with missionaries, won many

³Ibid., p. 9.

⁴This section is located six miles south of Gastonia.

of these non-churched people to Christ and they became Baptists. Desires and ideals have always been instruments in man's struggle to improve conditions under which he is to live. The early colonists believed in religious freedom and suffered many hardships in their struggle for this right. The early Baptists of the "Union Section" likewise suffered many hardships. Because of their belief, Baptists in some sections were persecuted. Many of the people who moved into this area of Gaston County were farmers. Often their belief forced them to move, sometimes to areas far removed from a Baptist church because this was the only land available. After getting themselves established, they often had to travel over poor roads for great distances to worship in a Baptist church. If the church was too far away, these people would meet together and if the opportunity was given they would establish a preaching place. Another way they received Baptist preaching was to have their preacher visit their community. These pioneer preachers would conduct services in in any available building, and when no building was available they would build a brush arbor or meet in people's homes. Many homes were used for this purpose in the "Union Section".

During the period of 1850 to 1860, several families moved into Gaston County from Fairfield County, South Carolina. Names are very important at this time but because of the poor method of keeping records, only two names can be

found which were connected with the early Baptist movement in this section. They were the families of Clem A. Featherston and William G. Warren. How many members of these two families were Baptists is not known, but the records show that William G. Warren was not because he joined the church after it was organized. However, a list of charter members shows a William Warren, Sr., presenting himself for membership at the organizational meeting.⁵ Whether this William Warren was the same man as William G. Warren is not known. The members of these two families who were Baptists held membership in the Mount Zion Baptist Church in Fairfield County, South Carolina. The nearest Baptist church to the "Union Section" was the Mill Creek Church in York County, South Carolina. Soon after moving to Gaston County these people moved their membership to this church.

The first preaching by a Baptist in the "Union Section" was done by Elder Alonso Webb, also known as the "Wandering Pilgrim" because he was constantly moving from place to place.⁶ Much of his preaching was done in the home of Clem A. Featherston and at the "old log house". This log house was built in the community, by the Presbyterians and Baptists, for

⁵Church Record Book, April, 1863.

⁶John R. Logan, Sketches, Historical and Biographical of the Broad River and Kings Mountain Baptist Associations From 1800-1882 (Shelby: Babington-Roberts Co., 1887), p. 21.

the purpose of holding protestant religious services. Elder Webb was not fully affiliated with the Baptists of this area but he considered himself a Baptist and believed in the Baptist principles and practices. He was without commission from anyone and was constantly challenging non-Baptist to debate on the subject of baptism. It is not known when Elder Webb first came to Gaston County, but he was present during the 1850 session of the South Fork Baptist Association. This session of the association disclaimed any responsibility for his conduct or character, and adopted the following resolution:⁷

Inasmuch as there is a stranger among us who calls himself J. Alonso Webb, and a Baptist, and inasmuch as we are accused by other denominations of holding a man among us who is occasionally calling them fools, liars, rogues, and hypocrites, with many other hard and slanderous names, therefore,

Resolved, that we as a body take no responsibility on ourselves as to the conduct or ministerial character of said man and advise our churches to mark the man that causes divisions and keep no company with him.

The next man to visit this section was Elder Ranson P. Logan who was a missionary from the Broad River Association to the Catawba Valley.⁸ While Elder Logan was serving in this capacity he visited the "Union Section" of the county and es-

⁷South Fork Baptist Association Minutes, 1850.

⁸Logan, Broad River, p. 470.

established a regular preaching place in the "old log house" built in 1845 on land donated to the community by Jacob Rhodes. It is not known how long Logan preached in the community, but it was long enough to establish a church as an arm of the Mill Creek Church.

Logan labored under the disadvantage of having very little education, but he became very popular as an explanatory preacher and a disciplinarian.⁹ After laboring for several years as a missionary to the Catawba Valley, this work was discontinued and Elder Logan again resumed pastoral duties. Sometime after the Civil War, Logan began to manifest symptoms of absent-mindedness, and finally insanity overtook him.¹⁰ He died at his residence in Iredell County on July 1, 1882.

After Logan left the community there was a period of time without noticeable Baptist activity, but through the effort of some of the people the movement was again resumed. Elder A. J. Cansler was invited to preach in the community in the latter part of 1862 or early part of 1863.¹¹ He seemed to have begun his work with great determination because things

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Kings Mountain Association Minutes, 1882.

¹¹Logan, Broad River, p. 22.

began to look bright for the Baptist work in the community. It seems that Elders Webb and Logan had not attempted to organize an independent church in the "Union Section". At least the records show that Webb only preached in the area, while Logan established the church as an arm of the Mill Creek Church. Elder Cansler began preaching and let it be known that the community needed an independent church. He worked hard to fulfill this goal and was an uncompromising preacher.¹² As he served the people it was felt that the time was ripe to start a new church. Several accounts say the Mill Creek Church was moving backwards and did cease to exist a few years later. To serve the new converts, as well as the regular members, a new place of worship was necessary.

Elder Cansler was a graduate of the University of North Carolina. His father wanted him to become a lawyer, but under the influence of his marriage to Mary Ann Martin, a devoted Christian, he became a minister.¹³ "He was a man of considerable bulk -- inclining to corpulency-- and possessed of a great deal of humor, thoroughly enjoying a good laugh.¹⁴ After leaving the "Union Section" he moved to Arkansas,

¹²Ibid.

¹³W. A. Graham, History of the South Fork Association (Lincolnton, North Carolina: The Journal Printing Company, 1901), p. 80.

¹⁴Logan, Broad River, p. 283.

where he died on February 24, 1872. His diary showed that he baptised over three thousand persons.¹⁵ While at Union Baptist Church he baptised eighty-nine into the fellowship of the church.¹⁶

¹⁵Graham, South Fork, p. 80.

¹⁶Church Record Book, 1863-1867.

CHAPTER II

ORGANIZATION OF THE UNION BAPTIST CHURCH

After Elder R. P. Logan left the community there was a lull in the Baptist activity for some time, until A. J. Cansler was called to preach. Elder Cansler, unlike his predecessors, came into the community with the primary thought of establishing the church as an independent church rather than let it remain an arm of the Mill Creek Church. One of the major reasons for this attitude was the noticeable decline of the Mill Creek Church. Several accounts give the reason for this decline as the result of a union with another church, and this resulted in the church losing its separate identity. When this failure became a definite possibility, impetus was given to the "Union" people to organize their own church. In actuality, the real strength of the Mill Creek Church was in the people living in the "Union Section" of Gaston County, and through these people enough strength was found to start a new church. The ground work had already been laid by Elder Logan, and all that remained to be done was to relocate an old church in a new community. Already mentioned concerning the need for this church was the distance the people had to travel to attend services at Mill Creek. Although it was only seven miles to this church, when we consider the mode of travel and the poor quality of

roads, it becomes quite evident that a new church was necessary. Finally, on June 26, 1863, the people met for this purpose. The following brethren from other churches composed the presbytery: Elder James Milton Garrison, from Sugar Creek; Elder A. Jacob Cansler, from Salem; Deacons Miles Hoffman and C. H. Abernathy, from Bruington; and Deacon Z. D. Smith, from Mill Creek.¹ The presbytery organized by electing Elder Garrison, president and Deacon Smith, secretary. The doors of the church were opened and the following people presented themselves for membership:

Clem A. Featherston, Elijah Smith, Jonh Smith, William Warren, Jr., William Warren, Sr., John Warren, William Featherston, D. H. Williard, Joseph McDaniel, James Smith, Caroline Smith, Martha Warren, Ellen Kendrick, Elizabeth Smith, Elizabeth Featherston, Tempy Clemmer, Jane Lay, Jane Night, Mary Compton, Mary Teague, Ann Kincaid, Mary A. Moss, Casandy Lay, Sarah Smith, Eliza Warren, Nancy Warren, Nancy Workman, Emily Baldwin, Winsey Williard, Mary Ford, Amarilla Moss, Ann White, Mary Johnson, Martha Ford, E. Costner, F. McCullough, Lucy Ford, Sarah Ford, Elmira Reagan, Caroline McCullough, Margaret Shannon, Jane Floyd, Mary Cannady, Catherine Johnson, Ann Warren, Matilda Warren, M. J. Johnson, and E. J. Johnson.²

The following slaves also presented themselves for membership:

Jacob, slave of J. Lineberger; Harry, slave of William Falls; Richard, slave of Dr. McLain; Mariah, slave of C. Featherston; Hanah, slave of M. Hoffman; Ruben, slave of C.

¹ Church Record Book, June, 1863.

² Ibid.

Featherston; Jane, slave of R. Hasty; Morris, slave of J. Robinson; Jensey, slave of D. A. Jenkins; Caroline, slave of William Brannon; Leanna, slave of J. W. Smith, and Wyatte, slave of C. A. Featherston.³

At this organizational meeting the church also adopted the "Articles of Faith", "Covenant", and "Rules of Government".⁴ The next order of business was to call a pastor. A. J. Cansler who was nominated and elected accepted the call. The church also joined the Catawba River Association at this time. During this early period much good was done, for the records show that people united with the church at almost every meeting. In August, 1863, during a revival meeting, forty-one persons joined the church on profession of Faith and were baptised.⁵

In April, 1865, no meeting was held due to a "Yankee" raid.⁶ An investigation was made to determine who led this raid was made but no conclusive evidence could be found. One account places General Palmer's Brigade as being the only troops in this area at this time.⁷ It is possible that some of his men were involved. An account by William L. Sherrill states that while camping in the town of Newton, one of Palmer's men killed a young Confederate officer for no reason.⁸

⁵Church Record Book, 1863. ⁶Ibid., 1865.

⁷Robert F. Cope and Manly W. Wellman, The County of Gaston (Charlotte: Heritage Printers, Inc., 1961), p. 95.

⁸William L. Sherrill, Annals of Lincoln County North Carolina (Charlotte: Observer Printing House, Inc., 1937), p. 182.

On another occasion, while Palmer was in Dallas, a trooper of the Twelfth Ohio Cavalry, John Berk, entered the office of the Register of Deeds, opened a ledger and entered his opinion of the people of the South.⁹ This opinion is not printable.

The church did not elect deacons until July, 1865, two years after its organization.¹⁰ No reason was given for this. It is possible that many of the men were serving in the war. A fair estimate of the number of men serving from Gaston County was around fifteen hundred.¹¹ The records show many of these names familiar to the "Union Section".

After Cansler left, the church called Tilman Rowland Gaines to the pastorate. He began his duties in January, 1867 and served until the end of 1868. The most outstanding event to take place while he was pastor was that of starting a Sunday School in March, 1867.¹² Gaines was a graduate of Furman University and spent one year in seminary.¹³ One of his most outstanding non-religious accomplishments was that of planning the city of Gaffney, South Carolina.¹⁴

⁹Cope, The County of Gaston, p.85.

¹⁰Church Record Book, 1865.

¹¹Cope, The County of Gaston, p.85.

¹²Church Record Book, 1867.

¹³Logan, Broad River, p.282.

¹⁴Ibid.

The next minister to serve the church was Elder Edgar Allen Poe. He assumed his duties in January, 1869.¹⁵ Due to poor health he was not able to give regular service to the church. During the latter part of 1869 and the early part of 1870, Elder E. Allison supplied for Poe. No church records are available for the time Elder Poe served. He was a graduate of Wake Forest College, and was said to be quite scholarly. Sometime in 1866 he wrote a history of the Catawba River Baptist Association.¹⁶ After several years he revised this work but it was never published.

The church was without a pastor for several months in 1870, until Elder Evander Davids accepted the pastorate.¹⁷ He served the church until 1871. His educational background is not known, except that he was a pioneer school teacher.

¹⁵Church Record Book, 1869.

¹⁶Catawba River Baptist Association Minutes, 1867.

¹⁷Church Record Book, 1870.

CHAPTER III

WHY THE CHURCH WAS RELOCATED AND RENAMED

When a church relocates there are many factors behind such a move. This writer makes no claim to know all the reasons why this church did so. The main reason seems to have been that the old building was dilapidated. The "old log house" which was used by both the Presbyterians and the Baptists was in bad need of repairs. The Presbyterians had taken the initiative and built a new church on the lot next to the land on which the "old log house" stood. The Baptists decided to seek land on which to build a new building. Since both Presbyterians and Baptists had assumed the name "Union", the Baptists probably thought it best to relocate in order to assume a separate identity. A suitable piece of land was found about one mile north of the old site. This land, a total of seven acres, was purchased from James T. Glenn for twenty-one dollars. The date given for this transaction was April 1, 1874.¹ While there seems to have been a minor misunderstanding between the Presbyterians and the Baptists, it does not seem to be the predominant reason that the Baptists made this move. Probably the people were ready to move, just as they were ready to organize a church a few years

¹Church Record Book, 1874.

before.

The exact date they started erecting a new building is not known, but since the new lot was deeded in April, 1874, the new building was probably started soon afterwards. There was no record of when the people moved into the new building but several accounts place it as being sometime in 1875. After the church was built the people were undecided as to a new name for it. The original name "Union" developed from the fact that both the Presbyterians and the Baptists met in the same building. This was a form of union, although they worshipped at different times. The people finally decided to adopt a new name. Often a very minor incident may suggest a name. This was true in the case of this church. It seems that the man who was building the church was constantly complaining about sand blowing on the lumber he was dressing. This was dulling the tools he was using to dress the lumber. Because he was always complaining about the "sandy plains" the people adopted the name as it now stands, Sandy Plains Baptist Church.

CHAPTER IV

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (1871-1921)

In writing this phase of the church's history, it is evident that something should be said about the lives of the men who have served the church as ministers, especially concerning their economic status and educational training. Very little information concerning their outside work was found. Since many of the rural churches held service only once or twice a month, most of the early ministers served more than one church. This is still a practice in many areas today. In regards to their educational training, in 1860 very few Baptist ministers had college training. By 1903, few Baptist preachers in Gaston County had even a high school education. Baptists differ from most other denominations concerning the educational training required in order to become a preacher. The Presbyterians have insisted upon an educated ministry for over one hundred years, while other groups require various degrees of training as a prerequisite for ordination.¹ The policy of the Baptists has been less exacting. The denomination has never adopted an educational requirement for its ministers.² Today, however, there is a tendency for

¹Liston Pope, Millhands and Preachers (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 108-109.

²Ibid. p. 109.

churches to prefer a man with some degree of training.

In 1871 the church called Elder D. W. Thomasson to the pastorate and he served until 1878. It was during this time that the church was relocated. Elder Thomasson came to the church with the reputation of being a good, sound preacher of the Gospel.³ He seems to have injected a new spirit into the membership, for the people began moving ahead once again. The people expressed a desire to have preaching more than once a month during his pastorate.⁴ The church was in a thriving condition, showing a small gain in membership. The church enrollment could be found only for the years 1874-1876, which showed an average of fifty-two members.

The next man called to preach was Elder Philip Ramseur Elam. He served from 1878 until 1881.⁵ Not many noticeable things took place while he was pastor. There was no record of baptism and only a few were added to the enrollment by letter. Probably the most important service he rendered to the church happened four years after he left. At this time he returned to conduct a revival. During the meetings, around sixty people joined the church.⁶ The minutes state that it seemed as "if the windows of heaven were opened to the church"

³Logan, Broad River, p. 283.

⁴Church Record Book, 1877. ⁵Ibid., 1878-1881.

⁶Ibid., 1885.

After Elder Elam left the church, Elder J. F. Morris was called to the pastorate and served the church for seven years.⁷ If the number of new members can be used to measure success, then Elder Morris was a very successful preacher. The membership showed an average enrollment of 128 during his pastorate.⁸ He had the reputation of being an acceptable and popular preacher, who desired to be educated so much that he was still being tutored at the age of thirty-six.⁹ Other than his duties as pastor of Sandy Plains, he also served as associational missionary in 1883. He was also instrumental in the re-organization of the Old Hebron Church, this church being located between the Catawba River and Dutchman's Creek.¹⁰ He considered 1886 as the best year of his ministry, up to this time.¹¹

Three men served the church during the next three years. W. B. McClure was first, serving the year 1888-1889.¹² He was followed by C. F. Felmet, 1889-1890, and J. M. Bridges, 1890-1891.¹³ The average membership during this period was

⁷Ibid., 1881-1888. ⁸Ibid.

⁹Logan, Broad River, p. 371.

¹⁰South Fork Association Minutes, 1889.

¹¹North Carolina State Baptist Annual (Raleigh: Edwards-Broughton Co., 1886), p. 21.

¹²Church Record Book, 1888. ¹³Ibid., 1889-1891.

160. Also during this period eleven members were excluded for various reasons. These reasons were not mentioned in the minutes.

Elder J. M. Bridges was succeeded by Elder B. M. Bridges in 1891. As far as can be ascertained, these two men were not related. B. M. Bridges served the church until 1901.¹⁴ While he was pastor eighty-six were baptised, twenty added by letter, and nine were restored, adding 115 members to the church roll. The minutes show that the enrollment decreased by forty-seven, thirty-one of this number being excluded.¹⁵

J. C. Gillespie became the sixth pastor to serve a one year term. He was called on the fourth Saturday in December, 1901, and began his duties in January, 1902.¹⁶ No outstanding number of new members were added to the roll, but many say he was a minister with a "heart on fire for the lost." Elder J. A. Hoyle succeeded Gillespie and served until 1907. Fifty names were added to the roll bringing the total enrollment to 133 members. Elder Hoyle was once a Methodist.¹⁷ In his later years he became a political aspirant and this injured his usefulness as a minister to some degree.¹⁸

¹⁴Ibid., 1891-1901.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., 1902.

¹⁷South Fork Association Minutes, 1918.

¹⁸Logan, Broad River, p. 170.

The successor to J. A. Hoyle was C. F. Felmet, being called for the second time. This time he assumed his duties in 1907 and served until 1910.¹⁹ The church added thirty-five members to its roll by baptism during this period, but the total enrollment showed a decrease of eight members. Elder Felmet was the only man to serve the church twice.

J. J. Beach, the next pastor, was called in May, 1910. He preached his first sermon on June 4th.²⁰ Since he also served the East Baptist Church in Gastonia, he held service at Sandy Plains on Sunday afternoons. He held service twice a month and while he was pastor, fifty-nine persons were baptised. He resigned in 1915, having accepted a call to the Southside Baptist Church in Columbia, South Carolina. He was characterized as a strong preacher, a full-fledged Baptist, and a great evangelist. He was responsible for no less than eight revivals while at Sandy Plains.

J. W. Whitley became pastor almost immediately after J. J. Beach left. Like his predecessor, Whitley was also serving East Baptist Church full time. During his pastorate new education rooms were built and the church's financial system was revised. Probably the most important thing that transpired while he was pastor was the organization of the

¹⁹Church Record Book, 1907-1910.

²⁰Ibid., 1910.

Baptist Young Peoples Union.²¹ More about this movement will be discussed in a later chapter.

W. A. Hough accepted the pastorate in 1918 and served for three years.²² Forty-two persons were baptised during this period and the church had a sizable gain in membership. Two important items of business were adopted during this pastorate. First, the financial system was again revised so that the pastor was paid in full each time he preached, and second, the pastor's salary was increased from \$250.00 a year to \$400.00 a year.²³

²¹Ibid., 1917.

²²Ibid., 1918-1921.

²³Ibid., 1920.

CHAPTER V

GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (1921-1963)

The first minister to serve during this period was C. J. Black, who was called to fill the remainder of the year 1921. He continued to serve until 1924.¹ During this three years the church received seventy-six new members, fifty-seven by baptism and nineteen by letter. This brought the total enrollment to 212. In 1923 N. A. Jenkins resigned as Church Clerk, a post he had held for nearly thirty years.² J. C. Warren was elected to take his place. In September of this same year, J. C. Millen resigned as Superintendent of Sunday School, and then on motion he was re-elected by acclamation.³ No reason was given for this action.

After C. J. Black resigned in 1924, the church used supply pastors while a permanent pastor was being sought. In September an attempt was made to elect a pastor from among R. G. Mace, C. L. Hunt, and W. N. Cook. C. L. Hunt received the most votes but after three standing votes the congregation failed to elect him unanimously. Later during the year, a motion was made by J. C. Ford to elect the man having the largest number of votes. This motion was carried.

¹Church Record Book, 1921-1924.

²Ibid., 1924. ³Ibid.

At this time W. W. Rimmer was the only one nominated. He was elected and as far as the records show, "every member present voted for him".⁴

Rimmer assumed his duties in the latter part of 1924, and served until 1927.⁵ In the spring of 1925, the church decided to compile a list of members who were paying nothing towards the support of the church and make this list public to the church. This led to a special conference two years later at which time the church roll was revised.⁶ Also during the spring of 1925, the church voted to assume the school debt of Sister Fannie Featherston, who was attending school at Boiling Springs, North Carolina.⁷

Since revivals are an important part of a Baptist church's life, the one held in the spring of 1926 was of special interest because it was conducted by the Rev. Mr. A. A. Lockee, a full-blooded Cherokee Indian from Buies Creek, North Carolina.⁸

L. L. Jessup was called to finish out the unexpired term of W. W. Rimmer, who resigned in May, 1927. Jessup remained as pastor until February, 1930.⁹ At this time plans were secured and an estimate of \$1464.00 was given to build an addition to the church. This work was to involve building

⁴Ibid., 1924.

⁵Ibid., 1924-1927.

⁶Ibid., 1927.

⁷Ibid., 1925.

⁸Ibid., 1926.

⁹Ibid., 1930.

two new classrooms and underpinning the building. A motion was made to adopt this proposal but it was rejected.¹⁰ In 1929 the church decided to keep its records from October to October since the Gaston Baptist Association was using this plan. Also during this year a motion was made to convert the building fund into a repair fund, with the stipulation that if a member did not approve of this, he had until the fourth Sunday in September to withdraw all or part of his gifts. L. L. Jessup resigned effective the second Sunday in February, 1930. While he was pastor the enrollment increased by forty members. The records show a total membership of 227 as compared to 187 when W. W. Rimmer left.¹¹

M. P. Rhyne became the next minister of the church and served for eight years.¹² In August, 1930, a revival was held with the pastor's brother, C. A. Rhyne, doing the preaching. Many of the people remarked that it was the best one held in the church in the last fifty years.¹³ On the last day of the meeting the people gave their pastor a pounding, filling his car with good things to eat and also presented him with a new suit of clothes.¹⁴ In 1931 the church voted to

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Gaston Baptist Association Minutes, 1927 and 1930.

¹²Church Record Book, 1930-1938.

¹³Ibid., 1930.

¹⁴Ibid.

add two rooms to the building, with work to begin as soon as enough money was on hand to pay for additional materials. The lumber was already on the church yard. During the remainder of 1931 and through 1934, very little business was conducted except for the election of officers. In 1935 the church called their pastor full time, thus M. P. Rhyne became the first full time pastor in the church's history. A very important task which a Baptist church performs is that of granting an individual a license to preach. It was about this time that C. E. Brooks asked to be licensed, and the following license was issued by the church:¹⁵

To Whom it May Concern

Greetings:

This is to certify that Sandy Plains Baptist Church assembled in conference, and did vote a license to Brother C. E. Brooks, a member of the above named church, to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and otherwise exercise his gifts as a Christian worker.

We commend Brother Brooks as a man of God and trust the brotherhood will accept him as such.

This the 23rd day of September, 1935.

M. P. Rhyne, Moderator
W. E. Barnes, Clerk

No minutes were recorded in 1936 and 1937,¹⁶ but in 1938 the pastor and the deacons met to discuss a request to

¹⁵Ibid., 1935.

¹⁶Ibid., 1936-1937.

license Charley Costner to preach. The request was met on condition that he spend time in school and home study to better prepare himself. M. P. Rhyne resigned on September 18, 1938 and S. Guy Walker was called to supply for three months. During the eight years M. P. Rhyne served the church he baptised 137 people. The enrollment at the end of his pastorate was 282.¹⁷

S. Guy Walker, having been called to full time duty after serving three months, began his regular duties on December 18, 1938. In January a meeting was held to discuss the advisability of building some new classrooms. A committee was appointed to secure plans and to get an estimate concerning the cost of such a program. After the committee reported their findings to the church, the church accepted the proposal. The addition was completed in July.¹⁸ In August, the regular revival was held with J. R. Cantrell doing the preaching. Two weeks before this meeting was to start, a tent meeting was held on New Hope Road. It seems that the pastor worked hard to help the church move ahead, for many things happened while he served. In 1940 the church voted to build a parsonage on the church grounds. This house, consisting of six rooms, was completed in September at a cost of \$1250.00.¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., 1930-1938. ¹⁸Ibid., 1939. ¹⁹Ibid., 1940

Sudden disaster struck the church in 1941. On Sunday morning January 26th, services were held as usual, but little did the people realize that it would be the last service to be held in the church. At four o'clock a fire was started in the furnace for the evening service. Mrs. J. L. Lewis arrived at the church at six o'clock and discovered that the building was on fire. It was completely destroyed. The people of Union Presbyterian Church offered the use of their building to the people of Sandy Plains. Robinson School was also offered as a temporary meeting place. Plans were made to rebuild as soon as possible. According to the 1941 minutes:

The building committee secured plans of a recently erected church building at Fallston, North Carolina, and these plans were submitted to Spencer Lumber Company of Gastonia, North Carolina, and W. H. Horner and Sons of Belmont, North Carolina, for a cost estimate. Both bids were around \$19,000.00. The church decided to hire a carpenter by the day instead of contracting the work. On February 23rd, L. L. Harwell and L. K. Jenkins were elected to serve on the building committee. Charles Moton, Troy Jenkins, and A. A. Bailey were appointed to see who would give lumber to help erect the building. Work of digging the basement and foundation was begun on March 10th. Timber was given by all who had it on their farms, both Baptists and Presbyterians.

The timber was cut and hauled by members of both churches. The Matherson brothers, who were saw mill operators, also helped. Some sixty to seventy thousand feet of lumber was cut. J. D. McAlisly was hired as carpenter.

Many people of the community helped with the building of the church. On the second Sunday in August, the first service was held in the new building. The third Sunday was observed as homecoming day. Around five hundred people were in attendance. On this day a revival was also

started with L. L. Cashwell doing the preaching.

In just a few months a building valued at \$20,000.00 had been erected, and the total indebtedness was only \$6,000.00. The members were looking forward to a greater year in 1942.²⁰

On Sunday September 26, 1943, A. A. Bailey, associate pastor, read a letter of resignation from the pastor, S. Guy Walker, who was on a leave of absence in order to return to seminary to better prepare himself for the ministry.²¹ In this letter he requested the church to elect A. A. Bailey pastor. This request was honored by the church.

A. A. Bailey had actually assumed the pastoral duties in 1942 while S. Guy Walker was on leave. In 1943, a garage was erected on the church lot. Through the efforts of the pastor the church debt was completely paid in May, 1944. On July 16th the building was dedicated.²² In 1945 the pastor was granted a three week leave of absence in order to conduct a revival for former pastor S. Guy Walker in Texas. Shortly after he returned, A. A. Bailey resigned so that he could enter seminary for further training in the ministry. During the combined pastorates of Walker and Bailey, 204 people joined the church bringing the total enrollment to 486.²³

In seeking a new minister, the congregation nominated S. Guy Walker and Carl Peacock with Walker receiving a

²⁰ Ibid., 1941.

²¹ Ibid., 1943

²² Ibid., 1944.

²³ Gaston Minutes, 1938-1945.

majority of the votes. He was called but wrote that he could not accept the call. Another meeting was held and this time H. L. Phillips, Carl Peacock, A. A. Medlock, and _____ Rogers were nominated. Medlock was elected and accepted the call. He assumed his duties on November 18, 1945. The records show mostly routine business being conducted during this man's pastorate, which lasted two years. While he served, the church raised the pastor's salary from fifty to fifty-five dollars a week, and adopted the rotating system for the Board of Deacons. There was a small decrease in membership during this period. Most of this decrease was caused by people leaving the church by letter. The total enrollment at the close of Medlock's pastorate was 461.²⁴

The next minister to serve the church was J. N. Bowman. He was called in September, 1947 after A. A. Medlock had resigned in order to pursue further training in the ministry at New Orleans Baptist Seminary. J. N. Bowman served the church for nine years. During the first few years of his pastorate only routine business was conducted. By routine business is meant such things as electing officers, making minor repairs, conducting revivals, etc. On September 13, 1953, the church was called into conference by W. E. Barnes for the purpose of determining how to replace four retiring

²⁴Ibid., 1945-1947.

deacons. Charles Moton made a motion that when a deacon's term expired, he would rest one year before being re-elected. This motion was accepted by the church.²⁵ Two weeks later, September 27th, Ralph Moten, Charles Moton, J. J. Harwell, and Puitt Stuart were elected deacons. Sometime just after Bowman became pastor the Fellowship Hall was completed. This building was started while A. A. Medlock was Pastor, and was built by the men of the church. It is commonly referred to as the "Hut". In October of 1953, a revival was held. This revival was unique in that nine ministers took part. They were: W. L. Walters, Z. Miller Freeman, V. Ward Barr, S. Guy Walker, O. B. Reel, R. Love Dixon, Frank Malone, Wilson Padgett, and L. A. McClure.²⁶

The year 1954 seemed uneventful except for routine business. In April, 1955, the church voted to send the minister to the Southern Baptist Convention, to hold their business meeting on Sunday evening, and made plans to erect an educational building. This building was erected before the pastor left the church in 1956.

Z. Miller Freeman became the next minister to serve the church and is still serving at this time. He preached his first sermon on March 31, 1957.²⁷ Although he was called in 1956, he could not assume his duties until 1957. Almost

²⁵Church Record Book, 1953. ²⁶Ibid. ²⁷Ibid., 1957.

immediately two important items of business were voted upon by the church. The first concerned when to hold the church's conference or business meeting. Earlier the church had decided to hold conference on Sunday evening. At this time the church decided to hold this meeting on Wednesday evening after the first Sunday. The other order of business was to administer the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper on the first Sunday of each quarter.²⁸ In closing out the calendar year the deacons proposed that the church buy the land on the west side of the church from A. C. Harper. The land was to be used for a play area and parking facilities. The church voted to buy this land at a cost of \$3,000.00.²⁹

In February, 1958, the church decided to receive the offering through the Sunday School. On March 5th the church made one of its most important decisions. A series of meetings would be held in the Bethel Community of South Carolina, with the intention of starting a mission in that community. The Bethel School was used as a temporary meeting place and this program was begun.³⁰ Many more entries concerning this matter were found in the minutes but will not be mentioned at this time because it is the plan of this writer to devote a chapter to this phase of the church's history. The church again exercised its right to issue a license to an individual

²⁸Ibid., 1957.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., 1958.

to preach the Gospel. In July, 1958, a license was issued to Bill Hoffman and he was also appointed pastor of the mission.³¹

During the year 1959 only two major business transactions were voted on by the church. Early in the year the church debt on the education building was paid in full. A dedication service was held in May, with J. N. Bowman conducting the service. The Rev. Mr. Bowman was pastor when this building was erected. In November five more acres of land was purchased from A. C. Harper. The cost of this land was \$2500.00.³²

Most of the business in 1960 seems to have been routine except for March. It was at this time, on recommendation from the deacons, that the church voted to remodel the main building.³³ A committee had been appointed in 1959 to investigate the building needs of the church. The plans adopted by the church provided for an enlarged auditorium which would accommodate four hundred and fifty people; a finished basement, with a lower auditorium and classrooms; the installing of new light fixtures and new furniture; the repainting of the entire church; a new heating system and air conditioner; two new restrooms in the basement; and the landscaping of the grounds; The cost of this program would be around

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid., 1959.

³³Ibid., 1960.

\$70,000.00. As work progressed on the building, the people continued to meet in the upper auditorium while the basement was being finished. On January 15th the people moved to the basement while the upper auditorium was being remodeled. On March 26, 1961, the congregation moved back upstairs into an enlarged and beautiful auditorium. The sentiments of the clerk must have been felt by all when he recorded, "To God, give the glory, great things He hath done".³⁴ On July 29th, Charles Moton, acting for the trustees, recommended that insurance be taken out with Watson Insurance Company of Gastonia, in the following amounts: \$100,000.00 on the church and education buildings; \$7,500.00 on the parsonage; \$6,000.00 on the fellowship hall; and \$3,000.00 on the caretakers house. This recommendation was accepted unanimously.³⁵

No further business was transacted, other than routine matters, until the spring of 1963. At this time a committee was appointed to formulate plans for a centennial celebration to be held in June. Those serving on this committee were: Charles Moton, Laura Hoffman, Blanche Jenkins, Arthur P. Stuart, and Ruth Lewis. The recommendations of this committee were accepted by the church. The celebration was to be held from June 26th through June 30th.³⁶ Five former pastors were scheduled to speak.

³⁴Ibid., 1961.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid., 1963.

On Wednesday June 26th, A. A. Bailey (1942-1945) delivered the message. On Thursday June 27th, S. Guy Walker was the speaker. Both of these men serve pastorates in Gaston County, while the other three reside outside North Carolina. On Friday June 28th, the message was delivered by A. A. Medlock of Baltimore, Maryland. He was pastor from 1945 to 1947. No service was held on Saturday. On Sunday morning, June 30th, L. L. Jessup (1927-1930) of Hampton, Virginia delivered the sermon. At the evening service J. N. Bowman (1947-1956) of Winter Haven, Florida conducted the service.³⁷ The present pastor, Z. Miller Freeman, summarized the building history of the church and presented other information to the church.

³⁷Centennial Bulletin, June, 1963.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH RELATED ORGANIZATIONS

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The term Sunday School had its origin during the 18th Century. The purpose was to serve the church in its teaching mission. The present day Sunday School is strictly a layman's movement. This organization is proving to be an effective agent for evangelism; for teaching missions, stewardship, and doctrine; for enlistment in service; and for developing denominational loyalty.¹

The Sunday School was first organized at Sandy Plains on March 24, 1867, during the ministry of Tilman R. Gaines.² He was an advocate of this movement and started one wherever he served.³ Interest began to decline in this movement during the pastorate of E. A. Poe, and continued while Evander Davids was pastor. In 1881 Elder J. F. Morris re-organized this phase of church activity. Elijah Smith was elected the first superintendent and served four years.⁴ Many men have served the church in this capacity.⁵

¹Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. II. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1961), p. 1315-1316.

²Church Record Book, 1867. ³Logan, Broad River, p.282.

⁴Church Record Book, 1881. ⁵See Appendix C.

From the beginning of this movement in 1867 to 1891 no enrollment figures were available. During the pastorates of B. M. Bridges and J. C. Gillespie, 1891-1903, there was an average enrollment of forty members.⁶ For the next thirty-five years there was a steady increase in the number of people enrolled. Over this period the records show an average annual increase of six members. The average enrollment for this period was 241.⁷ This period started an upward trend in the growth of the Sunday School at Sandy Plains. Sharp increases were evident during the next seven years. The enrollment from 1938 to 1945 averaged 400 per year, with 1945 being the high year, enrolling 493 members.

A sharp decrease in membership was noticed during the pastorate of A. A. Medlock, 1946-1947. The average enrollment dropped to 311 during this time.⁸ No reasons for this decrease could be found other than the fact that the records show fifty church members leaving the church by letter. From 1948 to the present time the number of people joining the Sunday School increased greatly. The average membership for this period was 508, with 1959 having the highest enrollment, 558.⁹

⁶Church Record Book, 1891-1903.

⁷Ibid., 1903-1938.

⁸Ibid., 1946-1947.

⁹Ibid., 1948-1963.

"Baptist Training Union" is a term used to designate the training program in Southern Baptist churches.¹⁰ It is conducted on Sunday evening just prior to the worship service. This program is organized, controlled, operated, and co-ordinated with the total program of the church. All members of the church and non-Christian members of their families are invited to attend. The Training Union has as its objectives: (1) to increase spirituality; (2) to stimulate growth in Christian character, attitudes, and skills; (3) to give a working knowledge of the Bible; (4) to educate in Baptist life, including distinctive doctrines; (5) to cultivate the Baptist spirit; (6) to encourage participation in the Baptist program; and (7) to increase understanding of Christian behavior in the world situation in all areas of human endeavor.¹¹

The organization was first known as the Baptist Young Peoples Union (B. Y. P. U.), but the name was changed to Baptist Training Union (B. T. U.) in June, 1934. Originally set up for those seventeen years of age and above, the program now has an active following of people from all age groups.

¹⁰ Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol. I. (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1958), p. 125.

¹¹ Church Record Book, 1917.

This program was organized at Sandy Plains Baptist Church on October 21, 1917, during the pastorate of J. W. Whitley.¹² He was aided by the Training Union of East Baptist Church of Gastonia. At the first meeting Miss Grace Beatty was elected president. The other officers were: Janie Ford, recording secretary; Clara Beaty, corresponding secretary; J. L. Featherston, quiz leader; and Haskel Millen and Julius McAllister, group captains.¹³ Many young people enrolled at this meeting, but very little is known about this programs formative years because of poorly kept records. The first enrollment figures on record shows an average membership of thirty-five in 1930.¹⁴ There has been a gradual increase in the number of people taking part in Training Union through the years up to the present time. Enrollment figures for the year ending in 1963 shows a membership of 180.¹⁵ This program in the Baptist church is probably the weakest as far as attendance is concerned. Not many people attend Sunday evening worship service and this greatly affects the Training Union attendance. Effort has been made to stimulate this program but so far little progress has been made.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid., 1930.

¹⁵Ibid., 1963.

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The Women's Missionary Society is an auxiliary of the Southern Baptist Convention. It was organized to stimulate the grace of giving and to aid in collecting funds for missionary purposes to be disbursed by the Southern Baptist Convention.¹⁶ The "Society" has developed programs for the youth of all ages. These groups are: the Sunbeam Band, for boys and girls under nine years of age; the Girls Auxiliary, for girls between nine and thirteen, and thirteen and sixteen years of age; and the Young Women's Association. Also part of this program are smaller circles which help the "Society" carry out its goals.

This organization was begun at Sandy Plains Baptist Church on October 13, 1910.¹⁷ Mrs. H. B. Moore, First Baptist Church of Gastonia, and Mrs. J. J. Beach, East Baptist Church of Gastonia, assisted the ladies of the church in this undertaking. Eighteen members were enrolled at the first meeting. The following women were elected to serve as the first officers: Mrs. Ferrie Jenkins, president; Mrs. W. E. Beaty, vice-president; and Mrs. Sarah Moten, secretary-treasurer. In 1919 the first auxiliary group was formed. This

¹⁶ Encyclopedia, p. 1506.

¹⁷ Church Record Book, 1910.

group was the Sunbeam Band, led by Mrs. L. B. Jenkins.¹⁸ The Young Women's Association, next to be organized, was started by the young women themselves in 1936.¹⁹ Mrs. W. L. Beaty was leader of this group for five years and was instrumental in keeping it active. The Girls Auxiliary was organized by Mrs. J. L. Featherston in 1938.²⁰

The women meet once each month and discuss a planned program, which is centered around some phase of mission work. The smaller circles also have a monthly meeting. The main duty of the circle is that of supporting the auxiliary program, while the function of the "Society" is that of advertising the various collections for mission work. There are two main offerings made each year. In December, with the major emphasis around Christmas, the Lotte Moon offering is taken in honor of a missionary who served in China. This offering is for foreign missions. In the spring, the Annie Armstrong offering is taken in honor of an outstanding missionary on the home front. This offering is for home missions. The goal for these programs vary from year to year. The church has in the past few years went beyond their goal.

¹⁸Ibid., 1919.

¹⁹Ibid., 1936.

²⁰Ibid., 1938.

THE BROTHERHOOD

The Brotherhood of the church is the youngest of the church related programs. It had its beginning in 1956, and Charles Moton was elected president.²¹ The program was originally started for the purpose of promoting missions, but in recent years it has become an all purpose organization emphasizing the total denominational program of the church. One of its delegated duties is to enlist men who are members of the church to be more active in the participation of stewardship. At the present time the Brotherhood is inactive. The men still meet, but very few take the time to attend these meetings. Following Charles Moton, who served two years as president, was James McDonald. He was succeeded by Ellis Jenkins in 1959. At the present time there is no president.

The men have organized the boys of the church into a program similar to the girl's program. This program is called the Royal Ambassadors. The training is centered around developing the boys to be mission minded. They also engage in campcraft, hobby work, and athletics. The boys are divided into chapters according to age. The junior chapter, ages nine to thirteen, allows each boy to work towards four ranks: page, squire, knight, and ambassador. The intermediate chapter allows each boy to work towards two higher ranks: ambassador extraordinary and ambassador plenepotentiary.

²¹Ibid., 1956.

CHAPTER VII

ASSOCIATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

The association is defined by Baptists as an agency through which churches collectively engage in activities beyond their capabilities as individual churches.¹ The purposes of an association are many. One of its main duties is to provide leadership in the development of a full educational and evangelistical program of the churches. They also sponsor good will centers. Some associations appoint missionaries to work in the surrounding territories. Such a case was mentioned earlier in this writing concerning Elder R. P. Logan, who was a missionary from the Broad River and Kings Mountain Associations to the Catawba Valley. Many other duties depend on local needs. In some areas the association plays a very active role in meeting the social problems of the community. Outstanding in the association's responsibility is that of acting as co-ordinator between the churches and the denomination as a whole. Annual church reports are given to the local association and these reports are then sent to the North Carolina State Baptist Convention in Raleigh. The one thing which must be kept in mind, however, is that the church still retains its identity as an inde-

¹Encyclopedia, p. 88.

pendent body, although interdependent upon one another as a member of an association.

During the one hundred year history of Sandy Plains Baptist Church, the church held membership in four different associations. No reason is given why the church left one association to join another. On October 9, 1863, the church joined the Catawba River Association.² The associational meeting of 1867 was held at the church from October 11th to October 13th. During this meeting a revival was also conducted.³

Shortly after this meeting the church left the Catawba Association and joined the York Association in York County, South Carolina.⁴ In 1881 the church asked for a letter of dismissal from this association and joined the South Fork Association, and remained in this group until 1919 when the Gaston Association was formed. The church has remained in this association since this time.⁵

²Church Record Book, 1863.

³Ibid., 1867

⁴Ibid., 1868.

⁵Ibid., 1919-1963.

CHAPTER VIII

HISTORY OF THE BETHEL MISSION

On March 5, 1958, the church made what could be called one of its most important decisions. It was proposed and approved that a series of meetings be conducted in the Bethel area of South Carolina. The first meeting was held the next day in the Bethel School.¹ The purpose was to start a mission in this community. The pastor of Sandy Plains presided at this meeting. Other members of the church who aided the pastor were: Bill Payseur, Superintendent of Sunday School; Charles Moton, Chairman of the Deacons; and Bill Hoffman.

The mission was started and regular meetings were held in a three room house across the road from the Bethel Gin. The first Sunday School was organized on April 6th, with fifteen people present.² On this date John Watts joined the church by letter, becoming the first new member to join the church. Prayer service was begun on May 3rd, and on July 9, 1958, Sandy Plains Baptist Church licensed Bill Hoffman to preach.³ He was also appointed pastor of the mission. He was called to full time service by the mission in October, 1958.

During 1959 it was decided that a new building was needed. The following committee was appointed to serve as a

¹ Church Record Book, 1958. ² Ibid. ³ Ibid.

building committee: Grady Deal, chairman, Z. Miller Freeman, Ralph Moten, Glenn Beattie, Carroll Harrison, and J. D. Harwell, advisor.⁴ A sum of approximately \$14,000.00 was borrowed for this construction. With lumber and labor being furnished by the people, the cost of the building was greatly reduced. The first service was held in the new building on November 1st.⁵ The dedication service was held the following week with Dr. Eugene Poston, head of the Bible Department of Gardner Webb College, doing the preaching. Also on the program were Z. Miller Freeman and the Sandy Plains Church Choir, which rendered the special music "To God give the Glory".⁶

The year 1960 saw the mission become an independent church. On Sunday June 19th, Carroll Harrison made a motion that the church adopt the Church Covenant and Statement of Faith as adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925. This was done and a list of charter members was read.⁷ The church was then constituted as Pine Grove Baptist Church. After the church elected Bill Hoffman pastor the doors of the church were opened for new membership. The new pastor then led the closing prayer.

⁴Ibid., 1959. ⁵Ibid. ⁶Ibid.

⁷Bethel Mission Record Book, 1960.



FRAGILE BOOK

NOT FOR CONTENT

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bethel Mission Record Book, 1960.

Catawba River Baptist Association Minutes, 1867.

Centennial Bulletin, 1963.

Church Record Book, 1863-1963.

Cope, Robert F. and Manly W. Wellman. The County of Gaston,
Charlotte: Heritage Printers, Inc., 1961.

Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol.I. Nashville: Broad-
man Press, 1958.

Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists, Vol.II. Nashville: Broad-
man Press, 1961.

Gaston Baptist Association Minutes, 1927; 1930-1945.

Graham, W. A. History of the South Fork Association,
Lincolnton, North Carolina: The Journal Printing Co.,
1901.

Kings Mountain Association Minutes, 1882.

Logan, John R. Sketches, Historical and Biographical of the
Broad River and Kings Mountain Associations from 1800-
1882, Shelby, North Carolina: Babington, Roberts and
Co., 1887.

North Carolina State Baptist Annual, Raleigh: Edwards -
Broughton Co., 1886.

Paschal, George W. History of North Carolina Baptists,
Raleigh: Edwards-Broughton Co., 1930.

Pope, Liston. Millhands and Preachers, New Haven: Yale
University Press, 1942.

Sherrill, William L. Annals of Lincoln County North
Carolina, Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1937.

South Fork Baptist Association Minutes, 1850; 1889; 1918.



EMASABLE BOND

NOTION CONTENT

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

The Articles of Faith, Covenant, and Rules of Government were adopted by the church on June 26, 1863.

Articles of Faith

1. We believe in one only true and living God, and that there are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and these are one in substance and equal in power and glory.
2. We believe the Scriptures are the words of God, and the only rules of faith and practice.
3. We believe in the doctrine of original sin.
4. We believe in man's impotency to recover himself from the fallen state he is in by his own free will and ability.
5. We believe that sinners are justified in the sight of God only by the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.
6. We believe the Saints shall preserve in Glory, and that they shall never finally fall away.
7. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances instituted by Christ and that true believers are the only proper subjects thereof.
8. We believe immersion only is baptism.
9. We believe that no person has the right to administer the ordinances but such as are called and ordained.
10. We believe in the resurrection of the dead and general judgment, and that the punishment of the wicked shall be everlasting and the joys of the righteous eternal.

Covenant

We the members of the regular Baptist church, who having been baptised upon profession of faith, and having obtained letters of dismissal from our several churches do covenant and agree, to give ourselves to God, and to each other having this day been constituted into a Baptist church called Union, we agree to take the Old and New Testaments as the only rules of faith and practice, we agree to the keeping of this place, to aid in spreading the Gospel throughout the world, to pray for each other, to attend to the necessities of our pastor and the poor of the church, praying that God in His goodness will bless the little, this day established, June 26, 1863.

Rules of Government

1. All meetings shall be opened by singing and prayer.
2. That the supply of the church shall be moderator when present, and in his absence another shall be called to the chair.
3. That we have our church meetings once a month.
4. That the majority shall rule in all cases, fellowship excepted.
5. That all members are expected to attend church meetings.
6. That all members are requested to contribute to the support of the church according to their several abilities.
7. That we commune once a year.

APPENDIX B

MINISTERS

1863-1866	A. J. Cansler	1907-1910	C. F. Felmet
1867-1868	T. R. Gaines	1910-1916	J. J. Beach
1869-1870	E. A. Poe	1916-1918	J. W. Whitley
1870-1871	E. Davids	1918-1921	W. A. Hough
1871-1878	D. W. Thomasson	1921-1924	C. J. Black
1878-1881	P. R. Elam	1924-1927	W. W. Rimmer
1881-1888	J. F. Morris	1927-1930	L. L. Jessup
1888-1889	W. B. McClure	1930-1938	M. P. Rhyne
1889-1890	C. F. Felmet	1938-1942	S. G. Walker
1890-1891	J. M. Bridges	1942-1945	A. A. Bailey
1891-1901	B. M. Bridges	1945-1947	A. A. Medlock
1901-1902	J. C. Gillespie	1947-1956	J. N. Bowman
1902-1907	J. A. Hoyle	1957-	Z. M. Freeman

APPENDIX C

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

1863-1881	No Record	1930-1933	W. E. Barnes
1881-1885	Elijah Smith	1933-1935	J. A. Reneau
1885-1887	J. D. Smith	1935-1936	J. M. Gaddis
1887-1888	Joseph Lanier	1936-1938	J. L. Featherston
1888-1891	No Record	1938-1942	Charles Moton
1891-1903	J. H. Hoffman	1942-1943	Floyd Hudspeth
1903-1904	N. A. Jenkins	1943-1946	P. R. Payseur
1904-1905	J. E. C. Ford	1946-1947	Floyd Hudspeth
1905-1906	J. L. Featherston	1947-1948	Carson Withers
1906-1907	J. E. C. Ford	1948-1949	M. N. Simpson
1907-1908	J. L. Featherston	1949-1950	Ellis Jenkins
1908-1909	S. G. McAllister	1950-1951	W. H. Beaty
1909-1910	N. A. Jenkins	1951-1952	James Barnes
1910-1911	J. L. Featherston	1952-1953	Eulas Colvard
1911-1914	J. E. C. Ford	1953-1954	W. H. Beaty
1914-1916	D. B. Harwell	1954-1956	M. N. Simpson
1916-1918	J. L. Featherston	1956-1958	W. L. Payseur
1918-1926	J. C. Millen	1958-1960	Ralph Moten
1926-1928	W. E. Barnes	1960-	Ross Beaty
1928-1930	J. H. Millen		

APPENDIX D

TRAINING UNION DIRECTORS

1917-1918	Grace Beatty	1943-1944	Mrs. W. L. Beatty
1918-1922	No Record	1944-1946	Laura Hoffman
1922-1924	Annie Lewis	1946-1947	Henry Beaty
1924-1925	Janie Beatty	1947-1948	James Barnes
1925-1926	W. T. Harwell	1948-1949	Hazel Bowman
1926-1927	Bessie Hoffman	1949-1950	Kyle Denton
1927-1928	J. C. Warren	1950-1951	Laura Hoffman
1928-1929	Laura Hoffman	1951-1952	Ellis Jenkins
1929-1931	W. E. Barnes	1952-1953	Laura Hoffman
1931-1932	Laura Hoffman	1953-1954	Carson Withers
1932-1933	Mrs. Henderson	1954-1955	J. J. Hoffman
1933-1934	Charles Moton	1955-1956	Carson Withers
1934-1938	No Record	1956-1957	Bobby Quinn
1939-1941	W. L. Beatty	1957-1962	Carson Withers
1941-1942	A. A. Bailey	1962-	Ralph Moten
1942-1943	Mrs. Floyd Beaty		

APPENDIX E

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY UNION PRESIDENTS

1910-1912	Mrs. N. A. Jenkins
1912-1915	Mrs. J. E. Beatty
1915-1922	Mrs. F. J. McAllister
1922-1925	Mrs. N. A. Jenkins
1925-1926	Mrs. J. L. Beatty
1926-1927	Mrs. M. L. Barnes
1927-1933	Mrs. J. C. Millen
1933-1938	Mrs. J. L. Featherston
1938-1939	Mrs. J. C. Millen
1939-1942	Mrs. S. G. Walker
1942-1945	Mrs. M. N. Simpson
1945-1946	Mrs. A. A. Medlock
1946-1947	Mrs. L. B. Jenkins
1947-1950	Mrs. Fred Denton
1950-1952	Mrs. L. B. Jenkins
1952-1958	Mrs. Frances Marr
1958-1962	Mrs. Ralph Moten
1963-	Mrs. Faye Gulliford

APPENDIX F

BROTHERHOOD PRESIDENTS

1956-1958	Charles Moton
1956-1959	James McDonald
1959-1963	Ellis Jenkins
1963-	Vacant

APPENDIX G

CHURCH CLERKS

1863-1864	C. A. Featherston
1864-1866	E. H. Whithers
1866-1868	E. C. Torrence
1868-1874	C. A. Featherston
1874-1877	L. L. Wilson
1877-1882	No Record
1882-1888	J. D. Smith
1888-1893	L. F. Groves
1893-1901	N. A. Jenkins
1901-1902	E. W. Hoffman
1902-1923	N. A. Jenkins
1923-1924	Carl Warren
1924-1944	W. E. Barnes
1944-1952	Charles Moton
1952-1953	Ellis Jenkins
1953-1954	Frances Beaty J. E. McDonald
1954-1955	Marcus Beaty
1955-1956	Charles Barrett
1956-1960	Marcus Beaty
1960-1962	Frances Beaty
1962-	Roberta Jenkins

ABSTRACT

The History of Sandy Plains Baptist Church 1863-1963

is an attempt by the author to give an account of the growth and development of the church, covering the first one hundred years of its history. This church is located in the southeastern corner of Gaston County, North Carolina in the area known as the "Union Section". The thesis will include the basic Baptist principles, the pastors and their accomplishments, and the general work carried on by the church.

The greatest hardship facing these people, prior to the organization of the church was, the distance they had to travel in order to worship in a Baptist church. The nearest church, Mill Creek Baptist Church, was in York County, South Carolina, which was only seven miles away, but when the mode of travel and the poor quality of roads are considered, short distances become handicaps. This reason alone probably caused these people to desire a neighborhood church.

The people instrumental in the organization of Sandy Plains Church were Baptist families who moved to Gaston County from Fairfield County, South Carolina. These Baptists won many of the non-churched people in the community to Christ and they became Baptists. At the organizational meeting on June 26, 1863, sixty-one people presented themselves for membership. Of this number twelve were Negro slaves.

The first building used for worship services was the

"old log house" built in 1845 as a joint effort by the Baptists and presbyterians. The first church was called Union Baptist Church. In 1874 the Baptists built a new church one mile north of the original site and renamed the church Sandy Plains. Sudden disaster struck the church in 1941 when fire completely destroyed the building but the people adopted plans to rebuild almost immediately. In 1960 the church was enlarged and beautified.

In this study the author was fortunate in securing many of the old church records. All associational minutes were found except those for the York Association in South Carolina. Several associational histories and the North Carolina State Baptist Annuals were found in the libraries of Gardner Webb College and Wake Forest College. Many churches were also very co-operative in making this study possible.